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Speech at Bedford Industries

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, AT BEDFORD INDUSTRIES. 29.7.74

Mr. Macklin, Mr. Gould, Mr. Jenkins, ladies and gentlemen :

Thank you very much for asking me to be with you on this notable day.

Bedford Industries has developed into a world leader in the field of vocational rehabilitation. It plays an immensely valuable role in training the handicapped. No less important is its work in making the community conscious of the potential of the handicapped to take up open employment within the general workforce.

Having graduated from Bedford to a job in outside industry the impact on the handicapped themselves is immense in terms of their new self-reliance and opportunity for career development.

Nor are the benefits confined to the handicapped. Each single worker who overcomes disability and supports himself or herself in open employment saves us a minimum of \$1,000 in taxes each year, and of course makes a further contribution to the Gross National Product. This becomes even more significant when it's appreciated that more than 1,500 handicapped workers have passed through Bedford in the last decade and are now fully involved in the community.

The State Government is well aware of the increasing need for expanded rehabilitation services in the community, particularly Vocational Rehabilitation.

There are no exact statistics showing the number of adults between the ages of 16 and 65 whose handicap hinders their vocational development. However, in this State there are more than 14,000 Invalid Pensioners, plus thousands more persons receiving Sickness Benefits. The handicapped include in addition to Invalid Pensioners, those who receive Blind Pensions, those on Accident Insurance, Workmen's Compensation, Tuberculosis Allowance, Repatriation Pensions, Invalid Superannuation from industry, State or Commonwealth Employment and those who are precluded by the Means Test from either Invalid Pensions or Social Service Benefits.

But this alone is not enough. They must have the maximum support of industry.

It is of great importance - that the community generally, and industry in particular, is made aware of the human potential of handicapped people and of the tremendous part Bedford Industries plays in the conservation and development instead of wastage of human resources.

It's for these reasons I'm delighted to have this chance to pay tribute to Bedford Industries for providing the opportunity for career development and to General Motors Holden's for supporting the work done here and acknowledging the personal efforts of the winners of these awards in overcoming their disabilities, and for providing incentives to them to continue to do so.

Thank You.

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